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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NICOSIA 000888

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SUBJECT: T/C NEGOTIATOR RASIT PERTEV RESIGNS

REF: NICOSIA 887

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald L. Schlicher for reasons 1.4 (a) and 1.4 (d)

11. (C) Summary: T/C lead negotiator Rasit Pertev resigned from his post as "Undersecretary" on November 5 and announced plans to form an as-yet-unnamed political party. He cited worsening conditions in which the T/C community lives as reason for his departure. Pertev led the "TRNC" negotiating team since 2005 and enjoyed good relations with the G/Cs and the UN, both of which viewed his departure as slowing an already-wobbly negotiating process. Reportedly, the former Republican Turkish Party (CTP) mayor of Nicosia, Kutlay Erk, is being considered as a replacement. End Summary

12. (C) The head T/C negotiator, Rasit Pertev, announced his resignation on November 5 after denying press reports to that effect on October 31. In a televised press conference, he criticized both the government and the opposition for failing to introduce the necessary reforms and changes in the "country." He added, however, that there was no enmity between him and "President" Talat. He also announced (Reftel) his intention to form a new political party. Initial reports indicate the party will be center-right, free market, and pro-solution.

13. (C) UNSRSG Moller told the Ambassador that Pertev had clearly alluded to him his desire to "move on". He added that Talat had blessed Pertev's plans to set up a pro-solution, reunification party. Senior UNFICYP advisor Wlodek Cibor told us that his first "impression" of Pertev's departure was negative, given the need to bring any replacement up to speed on negotiations. He also noted that Pertev was the focal point on two initiatives, including opening Ledra Street and formalizing a 1989 aide memoire codifying UNFICYP responsibilities in the buffer zone. (Comment: On October 19, Pertev told Poloff that Ledra "would not happen" and was generally negative regarding negotiations with the G/Cs. End Comment).

14. (C) Andrea Petrany, from the Diplomatic Office of the President and also notetaker during Pertev-Tzionis meetings, told Polchief that Pertev's resignation was "another set back" to the July 8th process, especially given the excellent relations he enjoyed with the G/C negotiator Tasos Tzionis. She noted, however, that Pertev was a bit nave in his assertions that the T/Cs could move quickly to full-scale negotiations without first identifying experts needed to conduct them.

15. (SBU) The rumored replacement for Pertev is the former CTP mayor of Nicosia, Kutlay Erk. Erk enjoys a reputation as an honest, successful businessman. He lost the mayorship to UBP

in 2006 by a razor thin margin. Erk participates in the bicomunal political-party meetings sponsored by the Slovak Embassy, but has otherwise kept a low profile since losing the 2006 election. His father went missing from a hospital during the intercommunal violence of 1963 and has not been found. He is the husband of Emine Erk, a well-known lawyer and human rights activist.

¶6. (C) Comment: Given Pertev's excellent personal relations with Tzionis and his two-year tenure, any replacement will not only have to win the confidence of his interlocutors, but also get up to speed on the issues. Nevertheless, negotiations seem to be on hold until February elections, giving Pertev's replacement ample time to at least complete the latter task. Erk, if rumors hold true, is a good choice. He enjoys excellent "bicomunal" credentials and is the top CTP man on foreign affairs. End Comment.

¶7. (SBU) PERTEV BIOGRAPHY: Rasit Pertev was born in Larnaca in 1958. He studied at Cambridge, where he received a BA and a Master's degree. From 1985-1987, he administered agricultural development projects in Zambia. From 1987-2000, Pertev was the Paris-based U/SYG of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (an association of national farmers, organizations and unions). In this capacity, he managed a variety of development initiatives in over 20 countries. Pertev moved to Turkey in 2000, where he worked for the World Bank on agricultural restructuring projects and in support of privatization of agricultural cooperatives. He returned to the "TRNC" and was DP "minister" of agriculture from 2004 to 2005. In April 2005, he became Under Secretary in the office of "President" Talat. Pertev is married with three children. His wife, Resiye, a Turkish citizen, works on agricultural issues for the Turkish

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equivalent of USAID (the Turkish Assistance Administration).

¶8. (C) Additional biographies of Erk and Pertev are available on Embassy Nicosia's SIPRNET web-site.

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